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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KABUL 002362

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TAGS: PGOV PREL PTER ASEC MARR AF

SUBJECT: PEACE JIRGA PREPARATIONS CONTINUE UNDER THE BIG TOP

REF: KABUL 2155

Classified By: Acting/Deputy Chief of Mission Carol Rodley for reasons
1.4 (B) and (D)

11. (C) SUMMARY: The Afghan and Pakistani Joint Peace Jirga Commissions have agreed on jirga dates and that the international community will be invited to observe the opening and closing ceremonies. The Afghan Secretariat has shared the list of Afghan participants

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and continues physical and security preparations of the jirga site. Post is supporting equipment requirements. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) PolOff visited the jirga site on July 22 and was briefed on preparations by Deputy Director of the Afghan Jirga Preparation Commission Secretariat Farid Hekmat and the Director's Special Advisor Waheed Omer. Hekmat and Omer confirmed that Pakistan has agreed to the dates August 9-12 for the jirga. They underlined that the dates will not be made public until immediately before the event. Prior to that date, all public mention will refer to the date as the second week in August. The Secretariat staff also provided updates on:

-- Participation: On July 20, the Afghan Commission invited its 350 selected representatives; all but seven have confirmed they will attend. The Afghan side has not seen Pakistan's final list, but Special Advisor Omer is hopeful the lists will be exchanged next week. (Note: Post is in the process of translating the final Afghan list from Dari, and will forward to the Department. End Note.)

-- Selection of Executive Committee: According to Special Advisor Omer, President Karzai prefers that Afghan members of the Executive Committee - the Overall Jirga Deputy Chair and Co-Chair of each of the seven working groups (ref) - to be elected by the Afghan participants rather than selected by the Afghan Commission. This election could occur during the Afghan delegation's orientation, which will be held over the three days preceding the jirga. Omer also clarified that although the Afghans have offered the

Overall Jirga Chair position to the Pakistanis, President Musharraf and the Pakistani Commission have not yet accepted this proposal. The other alternative is two Overall Jirga Co-Chairs, one Afghan and one Pakistani.

-- International Community Participation: According to the Director's Special Advisor, Afghanistan has convinced Pakistan to allow international observers during the opening and closing ceremonies. The Afghan Secretariat's staff is drafting an invite list of

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approximately 150 observers from diplomatic missions, the United Nations and other international organizations, and internal GOA guests, such as members of the Supreme Court and Cabinet.

-- Translation: The Commission Secretariat has 1000 sets of simultaneous translation equipment - 500 were leased through an Afghan business and 500 were borrowed from UNDP. Jirga discussions, which the Commission staff expects will occur in Dari, Pashto, and Urdu, will be translated into Dari, Pashto, and English.

-- Security: Omer relayed that security remains the Commission and Secretariat's number one concern. ISAF, CSTC-A, MOI, MOD, and NDS participated in a July 21 meeting to review plans for Peace Jirga security. The group discussed roles and responsibilities, anticipated posture of each organization, potential methods of attack, and command and control relationships.

-- Contingencies: The Director's Special Advisor Omer said the Afghan Commission has discussed what would

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happen if, for some reason, Pakistan reversed its commitment to attend the jirga during the agreed upon dates. The jirga would still happen. Omer said Afghan participants would discuss the same seven topics.

¶3. (SBU) POLOff toured the jirga site, which is the same location as Afghanistan's previous two jirgas. It was bustling with activity, including rehearsals by children and military honor guards who will perform at the opening. The Commission's Secretariat and support staff is working fulltime at the site, which consists of a main tent and five ancillary tents. Approximately 1000 chairs are already set up in the main tent, including sections for international observers and the Executive Committee. Photos showing the two presidents and posters espousing anti-terrorist sentiment are hanging in the main area. Breakout rooms for the working groups have been walled off.

¶4. (SBU) Over the past week, the Secretariat staff identified additional equipment needs such as generators, air conditioners, fans, and chairs. Post, working with USAID implementing partner The Asia Foundation and CSTC-A's CJ4, is meeting these requirements.

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